

Welcome!

For the single-family homeowner, going to City Hall for a permit can be a bit intimidating. The City of Bellevue has emphasized the importance of achieving a **fast, efficient, and predictable** process without compromising quality. Bellevue staff are here to guide you through the permit process and will help you understand the rules and regulations that apply to your proposal.

This handbook is your tool for starting the permit process. You will find information regarding the various steps, requirements, and resources available to you as you undertake your home



improvement project. Bellevue is recognized as a city with great neighborhoods, and maintaining that quality is a priority for all.

When is a permit required?

A building permit is required for the construction of:

- a new dwelling
- any addition of attached floor space to an existing dwelling (new or replaced living space, deck, deck with spa, garage, carport, etc.)
- all buildings and structures not attached to the house (storage and equipment sheds greater than 200 square feet, retaining walls greater than 4 feet in height, docks and piers, etc.)
- some alterations within an existing space (moving walls, adding skylights and windows, replacing or altering roof

sheathing, changing the roof pitch, etc.)

- demolition of any structure that originally required a permit

A clearing & grading permit is required for:

- a new dwelling
- an addition or structure not attached to the house that requires more than 1,000 square feet of disturbance
- new or changed landscaping, including the laying of new sod, where disturbance exceeds 1,000 square feet or grading exceeds 50 cubic yards of fill and/or excavation
- construction of a rockery or modular block wall over 4 feet in height
- removal of trees when the area of disturbance exceeds 1,000 square feet. Disturbance can generally be estimated at 50 square feet of disturbance for each living evergreen or deciduous tree, eight inches in diameter or greater.
- any work in critical areas, including removing blackberries
- removal of any significant tree within the R-1 zone in Bridle Trails subarea

A mechanical, electrical, plumbing, or fire suppression permit is required for any new system and most changes to an existing system, including a replacement furnace or hot water tank. Exterior mechanical equipment may require screening to reduce noise from the equipment. Work in an existing home may trigger fire sprinkler or fire alarm requirements.



A right of way use permit is required for:

- hauling for clearing and grading and for demolition of a structure
- a driveway, including changing an existing driveway's location
- rockeries or retaining walls adjacent to a right of way

Revisions for utility connections and other right of way changes may be made after issuance of the permit.



These are some examples of work that requires a permit—but not all. Remember, **check with city staff before you start work** to avoid complications and frustration in the future.

Any work proposed within a Bellevue-designated critical area will require additional land use approval. Critical areas include wetlands; riparian corridors (streams); steep slopes of 40% and greater, including a 50-foot top-of-slope setback; and floodplains. Additional setbacks to structures from critical areas will be required in most situations. When sensitive environmental conditions are present on your site, please contact the Land Use desk in Development Services in City Hall (425-452-4188) to understand what requirements will apply to your proposal.

What doesn't require a permit?

Generally, a permit is not required for maintenance activities such as decorating, painting, or non-structural repairs—glass, door

replacement, hardware, kitchen cabinets, carpeting, and flooring or trim work. Replacing most plumbing fixtures in the exact location does not require a permit. Detached structures such as sheds that are smaller than 200 square feet in area up to eight feet in height do not require building permits. Patios and decks less than 30 inches above grade do not require a permit but must meet any relevant environmental regulations and easement restrictions. Retaining walls and rockeries less than 48"—measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall—do not require a permit.

The Path Towards Success

There are many factors to consider when preparing to build a new residence or adding on to your existing home. The city's codes and development standards shape the way your site can be developed. Familiarizing yourself with these regulations before you begin to design or think about construction will save time and money over the course of your project. Below are some key elements to consider in planning new construction on your property and tips on locating information about them.

Zoning and Setbacks: Every piece of property in Bellevue is located within an assigned zoning district. Knowing the zoning of your site is important in determining the required setbacks for your project. As a general rule, structures exceeding 30 inches in height cannot be built within required setback areas. Contact the Land Use desk if you want to find out the zoning designation of your site as well as the required front-, rear-, and side-yard setbacks.

Environmental Constraints: General information on critical areas—such as wetlands, riparian corridors (streams), steep slopes, shorelines, and floodplains can be obtained by contacting the Land Use desk. Additional technical analysis or studies by a qualified professional—such as wetland delineations, geotechnical reports, arborists' reports, and biological evaluations—may be required in order to support a permit application.

Plat Restrictions: Plats and short plats will often have conditions and restrictions that affect building placement, height, and disturbance of land and vegetation. Title reports often include the recorded plat or short plat conditions. You can get an unofficial copy of these conditions by calling or visiting the Land Use desk. An official copy can be obtained by contacting King County Records at:

311 King County Administration Building
500 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

King County web site:
<http://www.metrokc.gov/recelec/records/default.htm>



Easements: It is important to know the location of easements on your property in order to make sure that you are not proposing to build within easement areas. You must keep easements clear of structures for maintenance and access purposes. Public and private easements for access, utilities, and other purposes can be found on the title report for your property and/or on the recorded subdivision map. If you want to learn more about locating easements on your property, please contact the Land Use and Utilities desks.

Other Agency Approvals: Demolition permits, shoreline permits, work in water such as wetlands or streams, and utility connection permits will often require approvals by other government agencies. These include the Washington State Department of Ecology, Army Corp. of Engineers, and King County Health Department. Staff will assist you in coordinating these reviews if they are required for your proposal.

Private covenants & restrictions: Many properties have private covenants and restrictions that are part of a homeowner association's agreement. While city staff recognizes the importance of covenants and restrictions to individual property owners, the city is not bound by them and does not enforce them. You can get information regarding private covenants and restrictions in title reports and by contacting your development's homeowner association.

Title Information: Title reports are a valuable resource for any homeowner. Not only can you find legal information regarding your property, you may also find information regarding easements, private covenants and/or restrictions, and vegetation removal limitations. Numerous title companies are listed in the Yellow Pages. Title reports are usually included in the real estate information gathered when you purchase property.

Surveys: You should not underestimate the importance of knowing the accurate location of property lines and easements in order to avoid conflicts with adjacent property owners. You will be required to provide a survey with some applications; however, hiring a professional licensed surveyor will provide peace of mind in any situation.



Technical Staff: The most valuable resource for any homeowner is likely to be City of Bellevue technical staff. Not only can you take advantage of their experience and knowledge of the permit process, but they can also direct you to the materials in Development Services such as aerial photos and development assistance handouts that can assist you with your project. A few simple questions can often help you avoid complications during permit review.

Where can I get information regarding permit requirements?

Development Services in City Hall (450 110th Ave. NE) provides access to submittal requirements, forms, and—most importantly—technical staff. On a walk-in basis, representatives from Land Use, Utilities, Building, Transportation, and Fire are available to answer your questions between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, with the exception of Wednesday when Development Services opens at 10 a.m. You can receive a broad range of information: zoning, building code requirements, utility availability, life safety requirements, right of way use and transportation improvements, clearing & grading requirements, tree removal regulations, and a wide range of other topics.



Permit Processing: Also located in Development Services, Permit Processing is your resource for information regarding submittal requirements, fees, timelines, and permit status. Staff will assist you in submitting a complete application and can provide or direct you to the information you need to be successful.

Phone and E-mail: If you are unable to come to City Hall, you may still contact technical staff by phone or e-mail. Please keep in mind that

due to the heavy volume of walk-in customers and phone calls, staff are not always readily available by phone but are committed to return all messages within 24 hours. When leaving a message, provide your property address and as much information as possible to assist staff in answering your questions.

Building Desk

425-452-4121

BuildingReview@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Clearing & Grading Desk

425-452-2019

ClearandGradeReview@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Fire Desk

425-452-4122

FireReview@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Land Use Desk

425-452-4188

LandUseReview@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Transportation Development Review Desk

425-452-4236

TransportationDevRev@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Transportation Right of Way Desk

425-452-4189

RightofWayUse@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Utilities Desk

425-452-4187

UtilityReview@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Permit Processing

425-452-6800

PermitTech@ci.bellevue.wa.us

Records: Historical information on past permits can be another helpful source of information for future submittals. You may visit the Records Center or call the 24-hour records request line at 425-452-7926. Please have an address, permit number, or King County tax parcel number ready to expedite the records search.

City Web Site: The City of Bellevue's web site provides a wealth of information about the city and its functions. The Permits and Inspections page provides forms, construction tip sheets, development assistance handouts, fee schedules, timelines, and online access to the status of any permits you have submitted to the city (see Permit Status on page 7). Please refer to the following links for online information:

City Home Page
www.bellevuewa.gov

Permit Status
www.mybuildingpermit.com (see Permit Research)



MyBuildingPermit.com: Mybuildingpermit.com is the collaborative effort of a growing number of cities. The site provides one-stop shopping to allow you to apply for, pay for, and receive electrical, low voltage, mechanical, plumbing, and reroof permits from each of the participating cities, who are working together to provide a unified approach to building processes and services.

The Bellevue Single-Family Building Permit Process

City staff offers coaching to help you navigate the permitting process. In an effort to facilitate a smooth experience and be problem solvers, we have revised our single-family application process, reducing both the difficulty and time it takes to get a permit. The benefits of the process are many, including one-on-one interaction with staff, reduction of the number of revision cycles, and new performance standards for application approval (new single-family = 42 days, additions = 21 days, remodels = 14 days).

Application Submittal: Please allow approximately 30-45 minutes for the single-family permit intake process. To submit your completed application, go to Development Services on the 1st floor of City Hall. Make sure that all appropriate application materials are filled out completely and that plans and drawings show all the information listed in the submittal requirements. If you have questions about filling out your application or preparing plans, please contact Service First at 425-452-6800 to be connected with the appropriate help desk, or come into Development Services to meet with a staff member.

Permit Number: Once you have assembled and completed your submittal requirements, you'll meet with a Permit Processing technician and receive a permit tracking number for your application.



Screening and Completeness: Applications are screened for completeness at intake. You will receive personalized service by most reviewing departments; some of the reviewers may approve your project for their portion of the review at this time. Then you will take your application materials back to Permit Processing and submit them. A Permit Processing technician will route your plans to those reviewers who have not yet approved them.

If your project is deemed incomplete by any of the reviewers, they will try to help you complete the application during this screening process. If this is not possible, the reviewer(s) will give you a copy of the screening checklist, listing the revisions needed to make your plans complete.

The permit technician will hold your application and a copy of your plans. You will have 30 days to make the necessary changes and take your plans back to Permit Processing to complete the intake of your application. The technician will route your plans for review.

Permit Review: Each reviewer uses the information supplied by you to determine if your proposal meets applicable codes and requirements. If discrepancies are found, this may delay approval of your project. The following summarizes the areas that are covered by each reviewer:

Building: Fire and life safety, energy code compliance, structural elements, dimensions, structure and lot access, and cursory mechanical and plumbing reviews.



Clearing & Grading: Erosion control, seasonal restrictions, storm drains, subsurface drains, and tree removal.

Fire: Site information for access road width and length, required turnarounds, size of water main and available fire flow, location of nearest fire hydrant, gross square footage of home, fire sprinkler requirements if needed, and size of meter and connection to water main.

Land Use: Site information, dimensions, clearing & grading (including erosion control), critical areas standards.

Transportation – Right of Way: Driveway design and public and private utility connections within the public right of way.

Utilities: Water, sewer, and storm drainage availability; connections and location; public utility easements; location of structures near or on utility lines.

Permit Issuance: Once the permit is approved by all reviewers and returned to Permit Processing, it is ready to issue in 24 to 48 hours. You will be contacted by phone when your permit is ready to be picked up. If your permit is not picked up within a year of the application date, it may expire.

Inspections: Once the plans are approved and made ready to issue, one copy is given to the applicant to keep on the job site. A second copy is put in the project file and used by staff. During the construction of your project, staff will perform inspections at different stages. The types of inspections required will depend upon the scope of work involved with your project. A preconstruction meeting is always required. The types of inspections may include clearing & grading, landscaping, foundation, framing, insulation, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and finals.

You schedule these inspections by calling the automated inspection line at 425-452-6875. The inspector must approve each phase of your work before you can proceed.

Your permit will expire one year from the issuance date if you do not start work. “Start work” is defined as having the first inspection.

Once work has started, you have a total of three years from the issuance date to receive your final inspection approval. If you do not complete the work, a new permit must be obtained for the balance of the work. And once work has started, the permit **expires if there is ever a 180-day period without any work occurring.**

Conflict Resolution: It is always best that the applicant work directly with assigned development review or inspection staff to resolve a conflict. Most issues can be resolved with good communication and a clear explanation of applicable codes and requirements. Supervisors are available to assist applicants when a

satisfactory resolution can't be reached. Please have a permit number and specific concern ready when contacting management staff. Service First (425-452-6800) can direct you to the appropriate supervisor.

Permit Status: Permit Processing can provide you with basic information regarding your permit, such as city reviewers, project status, and revision requests. You may now also track the status of your permit online from the convenience of your home. You will need to know either an address or permit number in order to check the status online at www.mybuildingpermit.com (see Permit Research).



Development review staff are available to provide you with periodic updates on the progression of your permit during the review process. Once your permit has been issued, building support staff (425-452-4570) can help you identify who your inspector is and answer questions about the inspection process.

For additional information

Bellevue has produced a large number of development assistance handouts, many of which pertain to single-family development. And new ones will be available on an on-going basis. You can pick up copies in Development Services or download copies from the Permit and Inspections web page.

You can also get construction tip sheets produced jointly by several cities on the Eastside. These are available in Development Services as well as on the Permit and Inspections web page or at www.mybuildingpermit.com (see Public Information / Construction Tip Sheets).

This document is intended to provide guidance and is for informational use only. It cannot be used as a substitute for city codes. Additional information is available from Permit Processing (425-452-6800 or permittech@ci.bellevue.wa.us) in Development Services at Bellevue City Hall.

For regulations that may apply to your project, contact the appropriate review desk in the Permit Center at 425-452-6800. Assistance for the hearing impaired: Dial 711 (telecommunications relay service).

